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Governor Harrison and the Treaty of Fort Wayne, 1809

BY ELLMORE BARCE, Fowler, Indiana

In the year 1800, William Henry Harrison was appointed by President John Adams as Governor of Indiana Territory, and he arrived at Vincennes on the 10th day of January, 1801, and immediately entered upon the discharge of his duties. At that time he was twenty-eight years of age, but notwithstanding his youth had seen hard duty as a soldier and officer on the frontier and had served as aid-de-camp to General Wayne at the battle of Falling Timbers. In that struggle he had distinguished himself for gallant conduct. At a time when a detachment of the troops were wavering under the murderous fire of the savages, and hesitating as to whether they would advance or retreat, he had galloped to the front of the line, and with inspiring words had cheered the soldiers on to victory. The report of General Wayne says that he "rendered the most essential services by communicating his orders in every direction, and by his bravery in exciting the troops to press for victory."

In personal appearance, Harrison "was commanding, and his manners prepossessing. He was about six feet high, of rather slender form, straight, and of a firm, elastic gait, even at the time of his election to the presidency, though then closely bordering on seventy. He had a keen, penetrating eye, denoting quickness of apprehension, promptness and energy."

Though descended from an old and aristocratic family of Virginia, and having been reared amid surroundings of luxury and elegance, the youthful soldier never shrank from the most arduous duty and the severest hardships of camp or field. At the time of his first arrival at Fort Washington (Cincinnati), after the defeat of St. Clair's army, he had been placed in command of a company of men who were escorting pack-horses to Fort Hamilton. The forest was full of hostile savages and the winter season was setting in with cold rains and snow. The company was ill provided with tents and Harrison had nothing to shelter him from the weather but his uniform and army blanket. He not only eluded the attacks of the

Indians and convoyed his charge through in safety, but made no complaint whatever to his commanding general, and received St. Clair's "public thanks for the fidelity and good conduct he displayed."

"During the campaign on the Wabash, the troops were put upon a half pound of bread a day. This quantity only was allowed to officers of every rank, and rigidly conformed to in the general's own family. The allowance for dinner was uniformly divided between the company, and not an atom more was permitted. In the severe winter campaign of 1812-13, he slept under a thinner tent than any other person, whether officer or soldier; and it was the general observation of the officers, that his accommodations might generally be known by their being the worst in the army. Upon the expedition up the Thames all his baggage was contained in a valise, while his bedding consisted of a single blanket, over his saddle, and even this he gave to Colonel Evans, a British officer, who was wounded. His subsistence was exactly that of a common soldier. On the night after the action upon the Thames, thirty-five British officers supped with him upon fresh beef roasted before the fire, without either salt or bread, and without ardent spirits of any kind. Whether upon the march, or in the camp, the whole army was regularly under arms at day-break. Upon no occasion did he fail to be out himself, however severe the weather, and was generally the first officer on horseback of the whole army. Indeed, he made it a point on every occasion, to set an example of fortitude and patience to the men, and share with them every hardship, difficulty and danger."

Of his personal courage in the presence of great danger and peril there can be no question. Judge Law says: "William Henry Harrison was as brave a man as ever lived." At Tippecanoe, after the first savage yell, he mounted on horseback and rode from line to line encouraging his men, although he knew that he was at all times a conspicuous mark for Indian bullets. One leaden missile came so close as to pass through the rim of his hat, and Col. Abraham Owen, Thomas Randolph and others were killed at his side. "Upon one occasion, as he was approaching an angle of the line, against which the Indians were advancing with horrible yells, Lieutenant Emmer-son of the dragoons seized the bridle of his horse and earnestly entreated that he would not go there; but the governor, putting spurs to his horse, pushed on to the point of attack, where the enemy was received with firmness and driven back."

To these traits, his fearless courage and willingness to share in the burdens and hardships of the common soldier, may be attributed his great and lasting hold on the affections of the old Kentucky and southern Indiana Indian fighters. To them he was not only a hero, but something almost approaching a demi-god. It is pleasing to remember that when the expedition against the Prophet was noised abroad, that Col. Joseph H. Daviess, then one of the most eloquent and powerful advocates at the Kentucky bar, offered in a personal letter to the general, to join the expedition as a private in the ranks; that Col. Abraham Owen, one of the most renowned Indian fighters of that day, joined the army voluntarily as an aide to its leader, and that Governor Scott of Kentucky sent two companies of mounted volunteer infantry under Captains Funk and Guiger, to participate in the campaign. It is also pleasing to remember that the warm affection of the pioneers of that early day was transmitted to another and younger generation who grew up long after the Indian wars were over, and who gave a rousing support to the old general that made him the ninth President of the United States.

On his arrival at Vincennes in 1801, the population of that town was about seven hundred and fourteen persons. The surrounding country contained about eight hundred and nineteen more, while fifty-five fur-traders were scattered along the Wabash, who carried on a traffic more or less illicit with the Indians. A large part of the inhabitants of Vincennes belonged to that class of French-Canadians, who produced the LaPlantes, the Barrons and the Brouillettes of that time, some of them renowned Indian interpreters and river guides, who figured prominently in the scenes and contests that followed. The remaining part of the population consisted of settlers from the States, the more conspicuous being the Virginians, who were afterwards denominated as the aristocrats, but who in reality contributed more to the growth and prosperity of the frontier post than any other element. From this class of Virginians, some of them men of learning and attainment, Harrison selected his retainers and henchmen. Chief among them were Benjamin Parke, one of the commanders at Tippecanoe, and the founder of the State law library in after years; and also Waller Taylor and Thomas Randolph, two of his aids in the Wabash campaign and of his immediate military family. These men, together with Harrison, comprised the "inner circle," who administered the affairs of Knox County and Vincennes, and at that time Knox County held the lead and control

in public transactions throughout the Territory. That they favored the suspension of the sixth article of the Ordinance of 1787, prohibiting slavery in the North-West Territory, is now established history, but they also organized the courts and the representative assemblies of that day; enacted and enforced the public laws, and set about to establish institutions of learning. Harrison in particular was a friend of the schools. Besides that, these men and their followers organized the militia, gave the woodsmen a training in the manual of arms, and exercised a wide-awake and eternal vigilance for the safety of the frontier. The military instinct of the early Virginian was one of the great factors that determined the conquest and established the permanent peace of the new land.

Probably no magistrate was ever invested with greater powers in a new country than was General Harrison in the first years of his governorship. "Amongst the powers conferred upon him, were those, jointly with the judges, of the legislative functions of the Territory; the appointment of all the civil officers within the territory, and all the military officers of a grade inferior in rank to that of general, commander-in-chief of the militia,—the absolute and uncontrolled power of pardoning all offenses—sole commissioner of treaties with the Indians, with unlimited powers, and the power of confirming, at his option, all grants of land." That he was left in control of these powers both under the administrations of President Jefferson and President Madison is sufficient confirmation of the trust and confidence they reposed in him. In the years to follow he was to conduct a great number of difficult negotiations with the chiefs and head warriors of the Delawares, Shawnees, Miamis, Pottawattami, Kickapoos and other tribes, but in all these treaties he was pre-eminently fair with the savages, never resorting to force or treachery, or stooping to low intrigue or fraud. On the other hand copies of the old *Western Sun* amply testify to the fact that prior to the important Indian treaties of 1809, at Fort Wayne and Vincennes, he issued a public proclamation at the latter place, prohibiting any traffic in liquor with the Indians, so that their judgment might not be perverted; that he constantly inveighed against this illegal commerce with the tribes, and that he at various times attempted to restrain the violence of the squatters and settlers who sought to appropriate the lands of their red neighbors. The language of his first message to the territorial legislature reads thus: "The humane and benevolent intentions of the government, how-

ever, will forever be defeated, unless effectual measures be devised to prevent the sale of ardent spirits to those unfortunate people. The law which has been passed by Congress for that purpose has been found entirely ineffectual, because its operation has been construed to relate to the Indian country exclusively. In calling your attention to this subject, gentlemen, I am persuaded that it is unnecessary to remind you that the article of compact makes it your duty to attend to it. The interest of your constituents, the interest of the miserable Indians, and your own feelings, will urge you to take it into your most serious consideration and provide the remedy which is to save thousands of our fellow creatures. So destructive has been the progress of intemperance, that whole villages have been swept away. A miserable remnant is all that remains to mark the homes and situation of many numerous and war-like tribes."

Again, at Fort Wayne, on the 17th of September, 1809, preliminary to the famous treaty of that year, this entry appears in the journal of the official proceedings: "The Pottawattamies waited on the Governor and requested a little liquor, which was refused. The Governor observed that he was determined to shut up the liquor casks until all the business was finished." This is the conduct throughout of a wise and humane man dealing with an inferior race, but determined to take no advantage of their folly.

It was the steady and uniform policy of the United State government to extinguish the Indian titles to the lands along the Wabash and elsewhere, so that they might be opened up to the increasing tide of white settlers. Contrary to the practices of most governments, however, in their dealings with aborigines, the United States had established the precedent of recognizing the right of the red men to the occupancy of the soil and of entering into treaties of purchase with the various tribes, paying them in goods and money for their lands, while allowing them the privilege of taking wild game in the territory ceded. President Jefferson had always insisted on the payment of annuities in these purchases, instead of a lump sum, so that a fund might be created for the continual support of the tribes from year to year, and so that they might be enabled to purchase horses, cattle, hogs and the instruments of husbandry and thus gradually enter upon the ways of civilization. That the dream of Jefferson was never realized; that the North American savage never adopted the manners and pursuits of their white

brethren, does not bespeak any the less for the humane instincts of his heart.

In the negotiation of these treaties in the Northwest, Governor Harrison acted as the minister plenipotentiary of the government, and the numerous Indian treaties of that day were conducted under express authority and command from the City of Washington. The series of negotiations finally terminated in the Treaty of Fort Wayne on September 30, 1809, by which the United States acquired the title to about 2,900,000 acres, the greater part of which lay above the old Vincennes tract ceded by the Treaty of Grouseland, and below the mouth of Big Raccoon Creek in Parke county. "At that period, 1809," says Dillon, "the total quantity of land ceded to the United States, under treaties which were concluded between Governor Harrison and various Indian tribes, amounted to about 29,719,530 acres."

As the consummation of that treaty was the principal and immediate cause which led up to the great controversy with Tecumseh, and the stirring events that followed, including the Battle of Tippecanoe, and as the charge was subsequently made by Tecumseh that it was brought about through the threats of Winnemac, the Pottawattamie chief, it may rightfully be said to be the most important Indian Treaty ever negotiated in the West, outside of General Wayne's Treaty at Greenville in 1795. We will now enter into the details of that transaction.

That part of the lands acquired by the United States government by the Treaty of Fort Wayne, and being situate in the valley of the Wabash and its tributaries may be thus described: It lay south of a line drawn from the mouth of Big Raccoon creek, in what is now Parke county, and extending southeast to a point on the east fork of White river above Brownstown. This line was commonly called the Ten O'clock Line, because the direction was explained to the Indians as towards the point where the sun was at ten o'clock. The whole territory acquired in the Wabash valley and elsewhere embraced about 2,900,000 acres and in the Wabash region was to be not less than thirty miles in width at its narrowest point. It will thus be seen that the tract lay directly north of and adjoining the white settlements in and about Vincennes.¹

There had been frequent and bitter clashes between the settlers and the Wea and Pottawattamie Indians of this part of the terri-

¹ Jacob P. Dunn, *History of Indiana*, p. 300.

tory for years. Justice and right was not always on the side of the white man. An acute commentator, speaking of the early frontiersmen, says: "They eagerly craved the Indian lands; they would not be denied entrance to the thinly-peopled territory wherein they intended to make homes for themselves and their children. Rough, masterful, lawless, they were neither daunted by the powers of the red warriors whose wrath they braved, nor awed by the displeasure of the government whose solemn engagements they violated."²

The Treaty of Greenville had given the undisputed possession and occupancy of all the lands above Vincennes and vicinity, and embraced within the limits of the territory ceded by the Treaty of Fort Wayne, to the Indians. They were given the authority by that pact to drive off a squatter or "punish him in such manner as they might think fit," indulging, however, in no acts of "private revenge or retaliation." No trader was even allowed to enter this domain unless he was licensed by the Government.³

It is needless to say that no fine sense of right and justice existed either in the mind of the white land-grabber or in that of his red antagonist. Many unlawful invasions of the Indian lands were made. Moreover, many of the fur-traders along the Wabash were of the lowest type of humanity. They employed any and all means to cheat and defraud the Indians by the barter and sale of cheap trinkets and bad whiskey and often violated every principle of honesty and fair-dealing. This kind of conduct on the part of the settlers and traders furnished ample justification in the mind of the ignorant savage for the making of reprisals. Many horses were stolen by them and often foul murders were committed by the more lawless element. This horse-stealing and assassination led in turn to counter-attacks on the part of the whites. In time, these acts of violence on the part of the vicious element in both races spread hate and enmity in every direction. This kind of history was made. "A Muskoe Indian was killed in Vincennes by an Italian inn-keeper without any just cause. The governor ordered that the murderer should be apprehended, but so great was the antagonism to the Indians among all classes, that on his trial the jury acquitted the homicide almost without any deliberation. About the same time, two Wea Indians were badly wounded near Vincennes by some whites without the slightest provocation. Such facts exasperated the In-

² Theodore Roosevelt, *Winning of the West*, IV, p. 32.

³ *United States Statutes at Large*, Indian Treaties, pp. 115-116.

dians, and led to their refusal to deliver up Indians who had committed like offenses against the white men." These things occurred shortly prior to the Tippecanoe campaign, but a condition similar to this had existed for some time before the Treaty of Fort Wayne. The governor was not insensible to the true state of affairs. He once said: "I wish I could say the Indians were treated with justice and propriety on all occasions by our citizens, but it is far otherwise. They are often abused and maltreated, and it is rare that they obtain any satisfaction for the most unprovoked wrongs." But he also recognized the fact, that the two races, so incompatible in habits, manners, customs and tastes, could not dwell in peace together; that the progress of the white settlements ought not to and could not on that account, be stayed; that it was up to him as the chief magistrate of the Western country and as the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, to solve if he could, the troublous problem before him, and he accordingly instructed Mr. John Johnson, the Agent of Indian Affairs, to assemble the tribes at Fort Wayne for the purpose of making a new treaty.

There were many false sentimentalists at that day, who not unlike their modern brethren, wept many crocodile tears over the fate of the "poor Indian." They charged that the governor, in the ensuing negotiations, resorted to trickery, and that he availed himself of the threats and violence of Winnemac, the Pottawattamie Chief, in order to bring the hesitating tribes to the terms of the purchase. In the face of the revealed and undisputed facts of history, these charges were and are entirely false, and were evidently put in motion by disgruntled office-seekers at Vincennes as food for the foolish.

The position of Governor Harrison during the whole course of his administration seems to have been this: He sought to ameliorate the miserable condition of the savages at all times; sought by all means within his power to bring to punishment those who committed outrages against them; constantly demanded that the illegal traffic in liquor be stopped. However, neither Governor Harrison nor any other man, however powerful, could stop the hand of fate, or abrogate the eternal law of the survival of the fittest. After every endeavor to put a stop to abuses, and to quiet the impending storm on the frontier, he resorted to the next, and seemingly only available means of putting an end to the difficulty. That is, he provided for the separation of the two races as far as possible so as to prevent

the conflicts between them; he provided for the payment of annuities for their support and so that they might purchase horses and cattle and implements of husbandry, and thus enter gradually upon the pursuits of peace. That the plan was not feasible does not detract from the fairness and benevolence of its proposer. He was but following the uniform custom which the government had at that time adopted and which the best minds of that age indorsed. He could not foresee, in the light of that day, that the red man of the forest would not accept the ways of civilization, and that all attempts of the government, however charitable, would be wasted and in vain.

The governor set out for the council house at old Fort Wayne on the first day of September, 1809, on horseback, and accompanied only by Peter Jones, his secretary, a personal servant; Joseph Barron, a famous Indian interpreter, a Frenchman for a guide, and two Indians, probably Delawares of the friendly White River tribes. He traveled eastwardly toward the western borders of Dearborn county and thence north to the Post. Joseph Barron, the interpreter, is thus spoken of by Judge Law: "He knew the Indian character well; had lived among them many years; spoke fluently the language of every tribe which dwelt on the upper Wabash; understood their customs, habits, manners and charlatanry well, and although but imperfectly educated, was one of the most remarkable men I ever knew."⁴

The governor arrived at the Post on the fifteenth of the month, at the same time with the Delawares and their interpreter, John Conner.

To appreciate properly the hazard of this journey of two weeks through an untamed wilderness, across rivers and through dense forests, camping at night in the solitude of the woods, and exposed at all times to the attacks of the savages, one must take into consideration that already Tecumseh and the Prophet were forming their confederacy and preaching a new crusade at Tippecanoe; that they were fast filling the minds of their savage hearers with that fierce malice and hate which was to break forth in the flame of revolt in a little over two years hence; that the British agents at Malden were loading the Indians with presents and filling their ears with falsification as to the intentions of Harrison; that they were already arming them with guns, bullets, knives and tomahawks, and that there were

⁴ John Law, *History of Vincennes*, p. 100.

those among them who would not hesitate at assassination, if they might hope to reap a British reward. Notwithstanding these facts Harrison did not hesitate.

The scene about to be enacted was a memorable one. On the one hand were arrayed the governor, with his servant and secretary, four Indian interpreters and a few officers of the Post; on the other, the painted and feather-bedecked warriors and sachems of the Miamis, the Pottawattamie, the Delawares and the Weas. On the third day of the council eight hundred and ninety-two warriors were present; on the day of the actual signing of the Treaty, thirteen hundred and ninety. No such body of red men had been assembled to meet a commissioner of the United States since the treaty with Anthony Wayne in 1795. Even at that assemblage there were present only eleven hundred and thirty.

There were chiefs of the Mississinewa, loud and defiant, who openly declared their connection with the British. There was Winnemac, the Pottawattamie who afterwards slaughtered the surrendered garrison at Fort Dearborn and boasted of his murder. There was Silver Heels and Pucan, Five Medals and The Owl. But above them all stood Little Turtle, the Miami. He had been present at the defeat of Harmar and the slaughter of St. Clair's army. He had fought against Wayne at Falling Timbers. In 1797 he had visited the great white father at Philadelphia, President Washington, and had been presented with a brace of elegantly mounted pistols by the Baron Kosciusko. There were braves present whose hands had been besmeared with the blood of innocent women and children—who had raised the savage yell of terror while setting fire-brands to the cabin and tomahawking its inmates.

During the days that were to follow there were many loud and violent harangues; parties of warriors arrived with presents of the British emissaries in their hands, and saying that they had been advised never to yield another foot of territory; at one time, on September 26, the Pottawattamie, in open assembly, raised a shout of defiance against the Miamis, poured out torrents of abuse on the heads of their chieftains and withdrew from the council declaring that the tomahawk was raised. Amid all this loud jangling and savage quarreling the governor remained unperturbed and steady to his purpose. Notwithstanding frequent demands, he constantly refused to deal out any liquor except in the most meager quantities—he restrained the Pottawattamie and made them smoke the pipe

of peace with their offended allies—he met and answered all the arguments suggested by the British agents—and after fifteen days of constant and unremitting effort won the chiefs of the Mississinewa and gained the day.

The official account of the proceedings as made by Peter Jones, secretary to the governor, and now reposing in the archives of the United States government, shows that instead of attempting to make any purchase of Indian lands when only a small number of representatives of the tribes were present, that the governor on the 18th of September, despatched messengers to Detroit to summon certain Delawares and Pottawattamies who were absent; that on the same day he also directed Joseph Barron to go to the Miami villages along the Wabash to call in Richardville, one of the principal chiefs of that tribe. The records also show that while the governor had some private conferences with some of the principal chiefs for the purpose of urging their support to his plans, that he addressed all his principal remarks to the tribes in open council of all the warriors, and at a time when four interpreters were present, to-wit: William Wells, Joseph Barron, John Conner and Abraham Ash, to translate his observations.

The first of these great councils was on September 22. The arguments of the governor, so interesting at this day, are thus officially set forth: “He urged the vast benefit which they (the Indians) derived from their annuities, without which they would not be able to clothe their women and children. The great advance in the price of goods and the depression of the value of their peltries from the trouble in Europe, to which there was no probability of a speedy determination. The little game which remained in their country, particularly that part of it which he proposed to purchase. The usurpation of it by a banditti of Muscoes and other tribes; that the sale of it would not prevent their hunting upon it as long as any game remained. But that it was absolutely necessary that they should adopt some other plan for their support. That the raising of cattle and hogs required little labor and would be the surest resource as a substitute for the wild animals which they had so unfortunately destroyed for the sake of their skins. Their fondness for hunting might still be gratified if they would prevent their young men from hunting at improper seasons of the year. But to do this effectually, it would be necessary that they should find a certain support in their villages in the summer season. That the proposed

addition to their annuities would enable them to purchase the domestic animals necessary to commence raising them on a large scale. He observed also that they were too apt to impute their poverty and the scarcity of game to the encroachments of the white settlers. But this is not the true cause. It is owing to their own improvidence and to the advice of the British traders by whom they were stimulated to kill the wild animals for their skins alone, when the flesh was not wanted. That this was the cause of their scarcity is evident from their being found in much greater quantity on the south than on the north side of the Wabash where no white men but traders were ever seen. The remnant of the Weas who inhabit the tract of country which was wanted were from their vicinity, to the whites poor and miserable; all the proceeds of their hunts and the great part of their annuities expended in whiskey. The Miami Nation would be more respectable and formidable if its scattered members were assembled in the center of their country."

The reasoning of the governor was cogent. That the British insisted on holding the frontier posts at Detroit and elsewhere so long, was directly attributable to their desire to monopolize the fur trade with the Indians. It was not so much their desire for dominion as their greed for profit. The traffic in skins was lucrative and the advancing stride of the American traders was viewed with jealousy and alarm. It was also true that the tribes along the Wabash were exhausting the supply of wild game. The plan of inducing them to accept annuities and to purchase cattle, hogs and other domestic animals for the purpose of replenishing their food supply seemed highly plausible to the minds of that day. That the Weas on the lower Wabash would be better off if removed from the immediate neighborhood of the white settlements where they could purchase fire-water and indulge their vices, did not admit of doubt. It was possibly the only plan of bringing relief from the troubles which were daily augmenting between the two races of men.

From the first, however, the appeal of the governor met with a cold reception at the hands of the Mississinewa chiefs. That their feelings in the matter were prompted by their jealousy of the other tribes present, and their claim to the sole disposal of any of the lands along the Wabash, there can be do doubt. Little Turtle was soon won over, but the younger and more aggressive chiefs of the Miami villages were hostile to him and openly expressed their disapproval of his conduct. The Mississinewa chiefs were also violently opposed

to the pretensions of Winnemac and the Pottawattamies. They claimed the Pottawattamies were new-comers and usurpers and had no right to a voice in the sale of the lands in the Wabash valley. The Mississinewa chiefs prevailed. On the 24th, the Miamis, "declared their determination not to sell a foot of land, observing that it was time to put a stop to the encroachments of the whites who were eternally purchasing their lands for less than the real value of them. That they had also heard that the governor had no instructions to make the purchase, but was making it upon his own authority to please the white people whom he governed."⁶ On the 25th, the governor, to overcome their opposition, made another long appeal in open council, declaring that the British alone were responsible for the feeling between the races. On that occasion he gave expression to certain ideas that Tecumseh afterwards eagerly seized upon as an argument in favor of the communistic ownership of all the Indian lands, and as an argument against the sale of 1809. The governor said: "Pottawattamies and Miamis look upon each other as brothers, and at the same time look upon your grandfathers, the Delawares. I love to see you all united. I wish to hear you speak with one voice the dictates of one heart. All must go together. The consent of all is necessary. Delawares and Pottawattamies, I told you that I could do nothing with the Miamis without your consent. Miamis, I now tell you that nothing can be done without your consent. The consent of the whole is necessary."⁷

This second appeal met with the same reception as the first. On the 26th, the Miamis again declared that they would never consent to the sale of any more of their lands. "That they had been advised by their Father, the British, never to sell another foot." At this moment it was, that the Pottawattamies started a violent altercation, setting up a shout of open defiance in the council house and threatening to resort to force. On repairing to the governor's headquarters, however, and reporting their conduct, Harrison, "blamed them for their rashness and made them promise not to offer the Miamis any further insult."⁸

On the evening of the same day, the governor held another extended conference with the Miami chiefs, and explained to them that the British were to blame for all their troubles. His remarks were

⁶ *Journal of the Treaty of 1809* (Ms.), now in the state library, pp. 12-13.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 15.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 16.

prophetic. He said: "In case of a war with the latter, (the Americans), the English knew that they were unable to defend Canada with their own force; they were therefore desirous of interposing the Indians between them and danger." The death of Tecumseh in a British uniform was part of the fulfillment of this prediction.

All the conferences proved in vain. On the 27th, Silver Heels, a Miami chief, was won over and spoke in favor of the treaty, and Harrison succeeded on the 28th in reconciling the Miamis and Potawatomi, but in full council on the 29th, The Owl, a Miami chief, flatly refused to sell an acre; made a bitter and sarcastic speech and among other things said. "You remember the time when we first took each other by the hand at Greenville. You there told us where the line would be between us. You told us to love our women and children and to take care of our lands. You told us that the Spanish had a great deal of money, the English, and some of your people likewise, but that we should not sell our lands to any of them. In consequence of which last fall we all put our hands upon our hearts and determined not to sell our lands." Harrison answered in a speech of two hours in length, and ended by saying, "that he was tired of waiting and that on the next day he would submit to them the form of a treaty which he wished them to sign and if they would not agree to it he would extinguish the council fire."

We now come to a circumstance which refutes much that Tecumseh afterwards claimed. In his famous meeting with the governor at Vincennes in August, 1810, and speaking of the treaty of 1809, he said: "Brother, this land that was sold and the goods that were given for it were only done by a few. The treaty was afterwards brought here, and the Weas were induced to give their consent because of their small numbers. The treaty at Fort Wayne was made through the threats of Winnemac; but in future we are prepared to punish those chiefs who may come forward to propose to sell the land."⁹ The record of the official proceedings, made at the time, show, however, that immediately upon the close of Harrison's last speech of September 29, that Winnemac arose to reply, but that upon noting that fact, all the Mississinewa Miamis left the council house in contempt. Not only was the Treaty of 1809 concluded by a larger number of Indians than were present at Greenville, Ohio,

⁹ John Dillon, *History of Indians*, p. 443.

in 1795, but the influence of Winnemac with the Miamis seems to have been of a very negligible quantity.

The truth is that the final consummation of the pact of 1809 was brought about by the ready tact and hard common sense of Harrison himself. On the morning of the 30th of September, the very day the treaty was signed, it was thought by all the officers and gentlemen present that the mission of the governor was fruitless. No solution of the obstinacy of the Mississinewa chiefs had been discovered. Nothing daunted, Harrison resolved to make one more attempt. He took with him his interpreter, Joseph Barron, a man in whom he had the utmost confidence, and visited the camps of the Miamis. He was received well and told them that he came, not as the representative of the President, but as an old friend with whom they had been many years acquainted. "That he plainly saw that there was something in their hearts which was not consistent with the attachment which they ought to bear to their great father, and that he was afraid that they had listened to bad birds. That he had come to them for the purpose of hearing every cause of complaint against the United States, and he would not leave them until they had laid open everything that oppressed their hearts. He knew that they could have no solid objection to the proposed treaty, for they were all men of sense and reflection, and all knew that they would be much benefited by it." Calling then, upon the principal chief of the Eel River tribe, who served under him in General Wayne's army, he demanded to know what his objections to the treaty were. In reply, the chief drew forth a copy of the Treaty of Grouseland and said: "Father, here are your own words. In this paper you have promised that you would consider the Miamis as the owners of the land on the Wabash. Why then, are you about to purchase it from others?"

"The Governor assured them that it was not his intention to purchase the land from the other tribes. That he had always said, and was ready now to confess that the land belonged to the Miamis and to no other tribe. That if the other tribes had been invited to the treaty, it was at their particular request (the Miamis). The Potawatomis had indeed taken higher ground than either the governor or the Miamis expected. They claimed an equal right to the lands in question with the Miamis, but what of this? Their claiming it gave them no right, and it was not the intention of the governor to put anything in the treaty which would in the least alter their claim

to their lands on the Wabash, as established by the Treaty of Grouseland, unless they chose to satisfy the Delawares with respect to their claim to the country watered by the White river. That even the whole compensation proposed to be given for the lands would be given to the Miamis if they insisted upon it, but that they knew the offense which this would give to the other tribes, and that it was always the governor's intention so to draw the treaty that the Potawatomis and Delawares would be considered as participating in the advantages of the treaty as allies of the Miamis; not as having any rights to the land."

The governor's resourcefulness saved the day. There was an instant change of sentiment and a brightening of the dark faces. The claim of the Miamis acknowledged; their savage pride appeased, and their title to the land verified, they were ready for the treaty. Pucan, the chief, informed the governor that he might retire to the fort and that they would shortly wait upon him with good news. The treaty was immediately drafted, and on the same day signed and sealed by the headsmen and chiefs without further dissent.

Thus was concluded the Treaty of Fort Wayne of September 30, 1809. The articles were fully considered and signed only after due deliberation of at least a fortnight. The terms were threshed out in open council, before the largest assembly of red men ever engaged in a treaty in the western country up to that time. No undue influence, fraud or coercion was brought to bear—every attempt at violence was promptly checked by the governor—no resort was had to the evil influence of bribes or intoxicants. When agreed upon, it was executed without question.